

# Various Assessments Utilized in California Preliminary Administrative Services Preparation Programs

Deborah E. Erickson

## Abstract

*Every two years, institutions sponsoring credentialing programs in California are required to submit a detailed biennial report, which includes data on at least four key assessments showing 1) candidate competence and/or 2) program efficacy. This article reports the types of assessments used from 25 institutions that completed biennial reports for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential between 2008 through 2011. Included are data from independent, California State University, and University of California institutes of higher education.*

For the past decade, there has been increased interest in accountability measures for institutions of higher education. In 2006, the US Department of Education report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of US Higher Education* called on universities and colleges to promote educational quality and “embrace a culture of continuous innovation (p.5).” One way to ensure continuous improvement and accountability, according to the report, was through the use of data to ascertain student learning.

The American Council on Education’s (2012) report, *Assuring Academic Quality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Self-Regulation in a New Era*, stated that major changes in the higher education environment create increased pressure on accountability, including the following: 1) heightened demands for accountability; 2) new forms of instructional delivery; 3) new educational providers and programs; 4) new students and patterns of attendance; and 5) globalization of higher education. The report suggested recommendations of increased transparency of accreditation, increased centrality of evidence about student success and educational quality, prompt action against substandard

institutions, common terminology, and enhanced cost effectiveness of accreditation.

In order to ensure quality in the programs accredited by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the accountability system for educator preparation was revised in 2006. The system was designed to assess program effectiveness and candidate competency through three activities: Program Assessment (program alignment with standards), Biennial Reports (data analyzed and used to assess program effectiveness and candidate competency), and a site visit (verification of the program assessment and biennial reports). Each institution completed a seven-year accreditation cycle, which includes the following:

- Year 1: Collect and analyze data
- Year 2: Collect and analyze data; submit biennial report
- Year 3: Collect and analyze data
- Year 4: Collect and analyze data; submit program assessment documents
- Year 5: Collect and analyze data; submit biennial report
- Year 6: Collect and analyze data; site visit
- Year 7: Collect and analyze data; follow-up to site visit

Every institution or organization offering CTC-approved programs followed this pattern, including educational leadership preparation. According to the report of the pilot process (CTC, 2007), the purpose of the biennial report was twofold:

To ensure that institutions and program sponsors are collecting candidate assessment and candidate outcomes data annually, and to ensure that institutions and program sponsors are analyzing the data they collect and use it to inform programmatic decision-making (p.1).

Every institution or organization which recommends credentials for teaching or service candidates is responsible for submitting a report every two years that includes the number of program completers, data from at least four assessments used to determine program effectiveness and candidate competency, and a unit report that provides an institutional summary and plan of action. The following table outlines the number of biennial reports submitted to the CTC (2012) as of 2011-2012:

Table 1  
*Number of Institutions Submitting Biennial Reports by Year*

Year	Cohorts Submitting (Fall Submission)	Total Number of Institutions Submitting Biennial Reports
2007-08	Orange, Green, Violet	47 (pilot)
2008-09	Red, Yellow, Indigo	51 (pilot)
2009-10	Orange, Blue, Violet	102
2010-11*	Red, Green, Indigo	117
2011-12*	Yellow, Blue, Violet	114

*Note.* \* In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, local education agencies that offer General and Special Education Induction (BTSA) were required to begin regularly submitting biennial reports.

### **A Brief History of CTC's Administrative Credential**

Prior to 1984, a single administrative credential authorized service in any administrative position. At that time, a two-tiered administrative credential was implemented to provide both entry-level preparation and a structure to provide support in advanced preparation in the first five years of service. A Commission report entitled *An Examination of the Preparation, Induction, and Professional Growth of School Administrators for California* presented the findings and resulting policy recommendations that were adopted by the Commission on March 5, 1993 (retrieved from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook.pdf>, p. 11). In March of 2002, the standards were redesigned to focus on instructional leadership and success for all students, and the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs) were approved as a framework for the preparation of and performance expectations for administrators. Also, at this time the Professional Clear standards were redesigned to include mentoring and induction activities based on an individualized learning plan. An examination-only route option was also established in 2002 (retrieved on 10.10.15 from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/SVC-Admin-Handbook.pdf>, p. 12).

Action was taken in 2008 to modify the format of the Preliminary Administrative Standards by eliminating the use of the

required elements; the Commission adopted these modified standards in April of 2009.

### **Educator Preparation Assessments**

As noted previously, all institutions or organizations approved by the CTC to provide a Preliminary or Professional Clear Administrative Services Credential submit data every other year to show candidate competency as well as program efficacy. Those institutions that submitted a biennial report during the 2008-2009, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011 academic years and provided a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) were included in this study, including the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems as well as private institutions. The following table outlines the number of administrative credentialing programs that were analyzed and included in the sample.

**Table 2**  
*Initial Teacher Preparation Credential Program Data*

Type of institution	Number of institutions reporting
University of California	3
California State University	10
Private, Independent University	12

In studying the various forms of assessments used by these 25 institutions, there was a wide variance of types of assessments as well as the purpose for which those assessments were utilized. Table 3 outlines the various assessments used by Preliminary Administrative Services Credential programs throughout the state to measure candidate competence and/or program effectiveness.

Table 3  
*Utilization of Various Assessments in PASC Programs*

Assessment	No of Institutions Utilizing Assessment	Percentage
Practicum Evaluation	21	84%
Portfolio	16	64%
Program Exit Survey	12	48%
Key Assignments	8	32%
Course Grades	7	28%
Field-Based Projects	7	28%
Course or Program Evaluations	6	24%
Induction Plan	5	20%
Surveys of Employers	4	16%
Summative Oral Presentation	4	16%
CPSEL Instrument	4	16%
Comprehensive Written Exam	3	12%
Capstone Paper	3	12%
360-Degree Leadership Analysis	2	8%
Case Study	2	8%
Assessment Center	2	8%
Candidate Self-Assessment	2	8%
Alumni Survey	1	4%
Reflective Essay	1	4%

The most highly utilized assessment across programs was the Practicum Evaluation, followed by use of some type of portfolio assessment. Because of the way in which the descriptions of assessments were submitted to the CTC, it was impossible to verify the equivalency of assessments. For example, what one institution named a “Capstone Paper” was included, but not the only, assignment within a portfolio assessment. These types of discrepancies are the cause for additional questions to be raised as to the current validity and reliability of measuring candidate competence and program efficacy using data from the biennial reports. While the biennial report has given institutions the opportunity to formally assess each candidate and use the data for continuous program improvement, there is no way for the CTC staff reading the reports to verify best practice in the assessment of PASC candidates, nor is there the

opportunity within the current system to measure assessments with a degree of certainty as to the reliability of the measurement.

In 2014, the CTC Commissioners requested that a special task force be convened to study the streamlining of the accreditation process. Included in the report were the design specifications for not only a teacher preparation assessment but also an administrator performance assessment. The original design standards for the APA called for a single assessment contractor to provide centralized administration and scoring for the APA and to support programs in the implementation of local scoring.

Local scoring implementation would mean that only faculty and other qualified individuals working with and chosen by the program would score the APA responses from a given institution's candidates. The training process would still be facilitated and the scoring process overseen by the contractor (retrieved on 10.15.15 from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2015-10/2015-10-2F.pdf>, p.3). The proposed design standards did not parallel that of the design structure of teacher education assessment, which allowed for multiple assessments to be used if meeting the design standards as set forth by the CTC.

In January of 2015, a California Department of Education \$1,000,000 grant was awarded to the University of San Diego. The grant called for the development of a valid and reliable performance assessment instrument and protocol that could be used in the state of California for prospective school administrators. The results of grant are to be finalized and made public in December of 2015 (Personal Communication, 10/9/15).

After input from leaders of Educational Administration programs from across the state, at the October Commission on Teacher Credentialing meeting CTC Deputy Director Amy Reising suggested that the preliminary administrative credential design standards parallel those expectations as set forth in the teacher assessment design standards. Testimony from CAPEA Past President Peg Winkelman was presented; as well, written input from educational leaders across the state was submitted and the item was tabled until more information could be gathered for the December 2015 CTC meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/meetings.html>).

The 2015 Fall CAPEA Conference included two agenda items on the recent changes in California Administrator Preparation, including the proposed Design Standards for the Administrator Performance Assessment. Deputy Director Reising reported on the recent extension of approval of the APA Design Standards, including the possibility of allowing multiple entities developing the administrator assessment. Gay Roby, CTC Consultant, updated the CAPEA membership on recent actions of the Commission (personal communication, 10/12/2015). Represented at the conference were faculty from the CSU system, independent universities, and K-12 district leaders. During the conference, attendees were asked for input regarding the APA, including previously approved design standards. The leadership of CAPEA is currently compiling all input from the membership who attended the conference.

### **Final Thoughts**

While the process is currently in revision, the biennial and subsequent site visitation reports submitted to the CTC staff and Committee on Accreditation have been frequent and thorough. As was found in the work of Darling Hammond (2010) and Chung (2008), the PACT and TPA assessments positively impact the work of the pre-service educator through his/her first year of teaching and beyond. Therefore, one would draw the conclusion that an assessment of pre-service administrators would also positively impact the work of the beginning administrator.

From the aforementioned issues in PASC candidate assessment, it is most likely that there will be some kind of assessment performance required for all PASC candidates in the state of California within the next two years in order to better assess candidate competency in a more reliable fashion. It is yet to be seen whether or not this may be a contract awarded to a single testing and measurement entity or if consortia or single programs will also be able to submit assessments that meet the Administrator Performance Assessment design standards. Since effective school administrators are required to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work closely with teachers, parents, and community, it would be imperative that any assessment make available the opportunity to measure the candidate's ability in these areas. From the work already done by

existing PASC programs in the measurement of candidate competence and the efficacy of programs, it would seem that some combination of practicum performances as well as a state-wide portfolio assessment holds promise for a reliable and valid assessment of our future leaders.

## References

American Council on Education. (2012). *Assuring academic quality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Self-Regulation in a New Era*. Washington, DC: ACE.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2012). Update on biennial reports (August, 2012). Sacramento, CA: CTC.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. (2007). Biennial reports: Report of the pilot. Sacramento, CA: CTC.

Chung, R. R. (2008). Beyond assessment: Performance assessments in teacher education, *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35 (1) pp. 7-2.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Evaluating teacher effectiveness: How Teacher performance assessments can measure and improve teaching. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

United States Department of Education (2006). *A test of leadership: Charting the future of US higher education*. Washington, DC: USDE.